

Email message, dated April 4, 2005, 11:56 a.m., to General Services, Budget Office, Energy Office, and Materials Management Office

What is Spam? " Spam is unsolicited e-mail on the Internet... From the sender's point of view, spam is a form of bulk mail, often sent to a list obtained from [various sources] that specialize in creating e-mail distribution lists. To the receiver, it usually seems like junk e-mail.

"Spam is roughly equivalent to unsolicited telephone marketing calls.... Spammers typically send a piece of e-mail to a distribution list in the millions, expecting that only a tiny number of readers will respond to their offer. It has become a major problem for all Internet users.

"The term spam is said to derive from a famous Monty Python sketch ("Well, we have Spam, tomato & Spam, egg & Spam, Egg, bacon & Spam...") that was current when spam first began arriving on the Internet. SPAM is a trademarked Hormel meat product that was well-known in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II." (Source: http://searchmobilecomputing.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid40_gci213031,00.html.)

Why can't Information Services get rid of it all?

There are several reasons. We block Spam basically through 4 tactics:

1. Email addresses
2. Keywords such as any rotten dirty word you can think of.
3. Rules used by the anti-spam device to check characteristics's of known spammers.
4. Blocking email that is known to come from insecure email servers.

There are reasons why this is not enough:

1. Concerning email addresses, many Spammers regularly change any part of the email address, particularly the first portion, so there is no way to keep up with all the email addresses that Spam can come from.
2. Spammers frequently misspell keywords, and there are too many ways that a word can be misspelled, making it impossible to cover all possibilities.

Background Information needed for Subsequent Discussion Below

1. The longer your email address is in existence, the more likely you are to get on these lists that send out Spam. General Services IS now has quite a number of email addresses you can use to receive email. For example, I now use: BBailey@gs.sc.gov for both receiving and for outgoing mail. However, I could *also* receive email at BBailey@ogs.state.sc.us or BBailey@gs1.state.sc.us. At this time, I am more likely to receive Spam at one of the older addresses. Over time, more and more spammers will find out and use my newest address, however.

What can you do to minimize it?

1. Use the most current address scheme. Of course, over time, that address will become known by Spammers.
2. Be picky about who has your email address.
3. Ask the IS staff to eliminate older email addresses and just allow email to be sent to your newest address; i.e., BBailey@gs.sc.gov only.

What is the quickest way for you to delete several Spam emails that got through to your inbox?

1. Display your list of incoming email.
2. Hold the Control [Ctrl] down....and.....
3. LEFT click on each email you see as Spam (if you accidentally choose one incorrectly, LEFT click on that one again and the highlight will be removed).
4. Place the arrow on any one of the emails highlighted on the screen.
5. RIGHT click and choose "delete" or "delete and empty," whichever you feel comfortable with. (If you choose "delete," it will place it in your trash and will be deleted when your trash gets deleted. If you choose "delete & empty," it's gone immediately.)

Questions? Give anyone in IS a call!